

**1. Call to Order:** Chairman David Hosmer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**2. Roll Call:** Michael Dougherty, Ronald Cabana, Frederick Chmura, David Hosmer, Glen Lessig, David Fortin, David Richardson, Roy Bradrick and Jeffrey Kelleher were present.

**Others:** John Navarro, Karen Fitzpatrick, Allan Walker, Julie Woodland, Mitchell Eaffy, Donna Stefanik, Wayne Durst, Ernie St. Jean, Preston Shultz, Linda Bernardi, Michael Bernardi, Chandler Paquette, Viktor Toth, Kevin Withers, Tina Lajoie, and Karen Munroe.

**3. Seat Alternate if Necessary:** None needed for this meeting.

**4. Approve Minutes from March 8, 2016 Regular Meeting:** David Fortin, seconded by Ronald Cabana made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 8, 2016 meeting.

David Richardson stated that in last week's correction he pointed out the wrong paragraph that needed to be corrected in the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. He said that the correction should be under Old Business, section E, in the second sentence. It should read "**In response to a question from Glen Lessig regarding health care savings** David Richardson reminded the Board that once the health insurance stipend was off of the table that merging insurances would not be a problem. **Motion to accept minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

**5. New Business:**

**A. General Government Budget Presentation:** First Selectman Allan Walker explained to the Board of Finance and the public that the General Government budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 is \$5,463,009, which is a \$77,321.00 increase from last year, or 1.44%. The redemption of debt is \$456,763.00, bringing the General Governments operating budget down to \$5,006,846.00.

Some of the increases this year are in wage increases, an additional pay week this year, revaluation, insurances, the Fire Protection Association, Woodstock Emergency Medical Service, the Transfer Station, recreation, and the libraries.

Some of the cost savings that the Board of Selectmen have implemented in the last few years are in consolidating positions in the Selectmen's Office and the Transfer Station to part-time positions, and in joining regional programs such as CIRMA and NECOGG.

In the Public Works Department there has been a wood burning furnace installed which helps reduce the use of propane. The wood comes from trees that have been cut down during trimming done by the Highway crew. The equipment is washed after every use and stored in a warm facility which increases the life of the equipment. The Highway Department now crushes its own gravel, with material that the Highway Department has been able to save from other projects.

Another way that the Highway Department has been able to save on equipment is through a partnership with Eversource. Through this program a trimmer has been acquired for road side mowing. The trimmer is shared with the towns of Eastford and Union. The Town of Woodstock now has sole possession of this trimmer, but a second one is also currently being shared again with Eastford and Union. This currently shared trimmer will eventually belong to one of the two other towns.

Mr. Walker announced that a 1 megawatt solar array will be installed at the capped landfill. This project will start this month. This will provide power to the Transfer Station, the Town Hall, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock Middle School, the Highway Garage, and the Water Pollution Control Authority pumping station. The power costs will be fixed for 20 years.

Mr. Walker quickly went over the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan which included fleet purchases, revaluation, transfer station updates and fire protection. Mr. Walker reminded the Board of Finance that what was on this list did not necessarily mean that the project was going to be done soon, but that it needed to be on this list in order to receive reimbursements from the State of Connecticut if these projects are to be done.

Mr. Walker distributed a packet to the Board of Finance in regards to the Board's questions to the Town's health insurance stipend and other health insurance questions.

At this point Mr. Walker asked if any of the Board members had any questions.

David Richardson asked Mr. Walker if the stipend is built into the health insurance figure. Mr. Walker said that it was. Mr. Richardson feels that the health insurance costs and the stipend are excessive. He feels that the answers received tonight to the Board of Finance questions in regards to the health insurance and the stipend is not correct. He would like a full-member to make the following motion: To limit Health Insurance opt out payouts (stipends) to \$1500 per year per employee for all non-union Town Hall Employees effective July 1, 2016 and for all union Town Hall Employees effective July 1, 2017.

Glen Lessig is pleased to get an opinion letter from the Town Attorney addressing the ACA and aggregate employer issue. He feels this issue is not a Board of Finance matter, and that this is a Board of Selectmen's matter. He is not in favor of the motion.

Ronald Cabana felt that other area towns should be contacted to see if those towns offer a stipend, and if they do what is the amount of the stipend.

Jeffrey Kelleher understands that the Board of Finance has the right to set line item limits, but he feels that the Board of Finance would be overstepping the Board's legal authority by dictating to the Board of Selectmen how to negotiate a contract.

Roy Bradrick agrees with David Richardson that the stipend is excessive. He also agrees with Jeffrey Kelleher that the Board of Finance cannot dictate to the Board of Selectmen how to negotiate a contract. He pointed out that taking away a past practice benefit could be detrimental when the union contract is next negotiated. He feels that this motion is dangerous.

Glen Lessig is also concerned that there may not be a cost savings if the people who are currently receiving the stipend return to the Town's health insurance if the stipend is taken away. David Richardson believes that there will be savings.

David Fortin stated that he feels his letter should have been discussed as a separate agenda item amongst the Board of Finance members and then forwarded on to the Board of Selectmen. He still feels that the stipend is discriminatory to people who do get the Town's health insurance. He feels that people who have longevity, but not taking the stipend are getting less than someone who has worked less years but are making more money due to receiving the stipend.

He also reminded the Board and the audience that the State of Connecticut is running at a deficit, and that the State will most likely be cutting more aid to Towns in the future. Speaking as a tax payer, and not as a Board of Finance member, he feels that the stipend is wasteful spending.

Glen Lessig asked Mr. Walker for some background on the \$12,600.00 in the Fire Retention line item. Mr. Walker, as well as Michael Dougherty and David Hosmer, who are currently volunteer members of the Woodstock fire departments, explained that this was a stipend paid for the fire department volunteers who respond to calls. It will be a small amount, approximately \$5.00 a call. The gentlemen assured Fred Chmura that the amount will be a non-taxable amount and will not create an employer/employee situation with the Town. It is a way to thank current members and a way to encourage new volunteers. This is a common practice in other towns.

Glen Lessig asked about funding the Town Beach. Mr. Walker stated that the beach will be open, but that there will not be a beach director or life guards this year.

Fred Chmura asked about the \$27,233.00 for revaluation in the Assessor's budget and in the Capital Five-Year Plan. Mr. Walker explained that it is an estimated amount in the Capital Plan. The revaluation needs to be reflected in the Capital Plan in order for some of the funds to be reimbursed from the State.

David Fortin stated that the budget reflects a \$77,321.00 increase from last year, but if the redemption of debt is figured in it is approximately \$118,000.00. Allan Walker said that once the reduction of debt is deducted from the increase, the increase from last year's General Government operating budget is \$77,321.00.

David Hosmer asked about the \$9,680.00 for repairs at the tennis court. Mr. Walker explained that the cost to repair the court was approximately \$21,000.00. However Woodstock Academy and the Hyde School also use the court, and it is hoped that both schools will contribute to the repairs.

John Navarro, Highway foreman, answered questions from the Board of Finance in regards to gas and diesel costs. He explained that it was hard to predict the price of gas and diesel, but he would rather guess high, than come in short. He also explained that the big jump in parts and supplies came in the increased cost of tires. He also explained that the increase in the Hazardous Waste line item was due to cleaning the wash basin system and in disposing of oil.

David Richardson asked if the fixed price on the solar panels included transportation fees. Allan Walker believed that it did, but he would check on that.

David Fortin, seconded by Michael Dougherty made the following motion that we suggest to the Board of Selectmen that they discontinue the stipend policy as currently calculated for non-union employees and pay the amount of \$1500.00 to those employees who decline Health Insurance beginning with the new Fiscal Year.

Being no discussion Chairman David Hosmer called for a vote on the question. **In favor:** David Fortin and Michael Dougherty. **Not in favor:** David Hosmer, Glen Lessig and Fred Chmura. **Abstaining:** Ronald Cabana. **Motion fails.**

**B. Warn Public Meeting:** David Hosmer read the public hearing notice:

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 05, 2016 7:00 P.M.  
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL

The Board of Finance of the Town of Woodstock will hold a Public Hearing at the Woodstock Town Hall on Tuesday, April 05, 2016 at 7:00p.m. In accordance with section 7-344 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Itemized estimates of the expenditures of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education will be presented and the Board of Finance will hear all persons who wish to be heard in regard to any appropriations which they are desirous that the Board of Finance shall recommend or reject for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

Dated at Woodstock, CT. This 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016.

David A Hosmer, Chairman  
Woodstock Board of Finance

David Fortin, seconded by Michael Dougherty motioned to accept the Public Hearing motion as presented. **Motion passed.**

**C. Discuss Transportation:** Superintendent Viktor Toth explained that he, First Selectman Walker, the Board of Education's attorney, as well as the Town's Attorney were investigating the correct way in handling the sale of the bus fleet to the private company if the Board of Education decides to privatize transportation.

David Hosmer asked if the State of Connecticut will still reimburse the Town of Woodstock for transportation costs if the Board of Education goes forward with privatization and if this will increase Prop 46 numbers. Viktor Toth assured that the State would continue with the reimbursements, and the business manager Karen Munroe thought that it would increase the Prop 46 numbers. In the long run the tax payers of the Town will see savings if the Board of Education goes with privatization.

Viktor Toth explained that the bidding process with private companies was quite competitive, and he felt that if things didn't work out with the company that won the bid, there would be no trouble finding a new bus company.

**6. Old Business:**

**A. Update on Policy Manual:** Tabled until after the budget season.

**B. Review Dave Richardson's Concerns and Draft Internal Service Fund:** Treasurer Donna Stefanik agreed to forward the draft to the Town Attorney and to the Auditor to make sure it was correct. It was agreed to table this until after the budget season.

**C. Update on Email Address Request for BOF:** First Selectmen Allan Walker handed out an instruction sheet detailing how to set up a gmail account for Boards and Commissions. It was decided to table this until after the budget season.

**7. Citizens Participation:** Preston Shultz wondered why the Town of Woodstock had an Ethics Policy when people who negotiate contracts benefit from those contracts.

**8. Correspondence & Announcements:** None.

**9. Adjournment:** Glen Lessig, seconded by Fred Chmura made a motion to adjourn at 8:45pm. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted  
Christine G. French  
Clerk